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DKS era begins, 13 mins take oath

Parameshwara deputy CM; Khader, Yathindra only new faces, rest from previous cabinet

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI
@ Bengaluru

SIXTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD Doddalahalli Kempegowda Shivakumar on Wednesday took the oath as the 18th chief minister of the state of Karnataka. The swearing-in ceremony, held at the Glass House of Lok Bhavan, also saw Dr G Parameshwara taking the oath as the deputy chief minister, marking his second stint at that.

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot administered the oath of office and secrecy to Shivakumar and a council of 13 ministers, including Dr G Parameshwara, with the other 12 being KH Muniyappa, KJ George, MB Patil, Ramalinga Reddy, Sathish Jarakiholi, Krishna Byregowda, Priyank Kharge, UT Khader, Eshwar Khandre, Dr Yathindra Siddaramaiah, Byrathi Suresh and Sharan Prakash Patil. However their portfolios are yet to be allotted, while the list of additional ministers in the next phase is expected to be done after the June 18 polls to four Rajya Sabha seats of Karnataka and the biennial elections for seven MLC seats.

While UT Khader and Dr Yathindra are newly inducted ministers under Shivakumar, the rest have served as ministers in the former CM Siddaramaiah's cabinet previously. Notably, four legislators representing Bengaluru made it to Shivakumar's partial cabinet in the first phase, raising hopes for the city's development.

Holding a copy of the Indian Constitution, Shivakumar took the oath in the name of his deity 'Veera Gangadhara Ajjayya Swamy' at 4.14 pm.

Before taking oath, he bowed before the gathering and offered floral tributes to Ajjayya's portrait prominently present on the dais. Parameshwara, a Dalit face of the government, took oath in the name of Dr BR Ambedkar, architect of the Indian constitution, which evoked huge cheers from the gathering.

Shivakumar will now be the CM for the remaining term of one year and ten months ahead of the 2028 assembly polls. **P5**

DK Shivakumar seeks the blessings of his mother Gowramma before taking oath as chief minister in Bengaluru on Wednesday | EXPRESS

> **The CM chair does not belong to this DK Shivakumar; it is the people's chair. I will dedicate the power given by the people to the service of the people. Setting aside my personal views, I have taken up this power with the resolve to serve the people of the state**
>
> DK Shivakumar, Chief Minister

BK Hariprasad picked as KPCC president

The Congress high command on Wednesday evening announced 71-year-old veteran leader and MLC BK Hariprasad as president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) after DK Shivakumar resigned from the post in the morning | **P5**

DKS makes big announcements

FREE BUS PASS FOR ALL STUDENTS: Free bus travel for all students studying in government, private and even aided institutions, from school to postgraduate level. Applications for the scheme will be issued in the coming days. At present, only girl students are getting benefit because of the Shakti guarantee scheme.

ONLINE EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE: Government to launch an online employment portal to connect job seekers with private-sector employers and provide industry-specific skill training. Developed in consultation with industry bodies, the platform will function as an online employment exchange for sectors such as IT-BT, healthcare and hospitality. A certain percentage will be fixed for Kannadigas and this initiative is expected to take shape within a month.

10K YOUTH CLUBS: The government will set up 10,000 Bharat Jodo Youth Associations across the state to promote sports, culture and skill development. Each association will receive ₹10 lakh and have 150-200 youth members.

KHATA CONVERSION: The B Khata to A Khata conversion which is available in Bengaluru will be extended across the state.

ONE-TIME SETTLEMENT: The government is planning a one-time relief for buildings up to 2500 sqft without completion and occupancy certificates, enabling owners to secure water and electricity connections.

BETTER ROADS FOR BENGALURU: ₹2,000 crore to be allocated for road asphalting within Greater Bengaluru Authority and BDA limits and all roads will be covered within three to four months.

INSIDE ▸▸ **ZAMEER AHMED MISSES FIRST LIST OF MINISTERS** | P4 | RELIGIOUS HEADS, GALAXY OF STARS ATTEND EVENT | P5

PHOTOS: PTI

1 Fire at the Flourish Stay B&B (above) in Malviya Nagar started around 8.30 am and spread through the five-floor building. It had only one entry-exit point

2 A family of foreign nationals (left) hangs from the B&B window as fire engulfs the building

3 It housed a restaurant on the ground floor while the basement and upper floors were being used as the hotel

11 FOREIGNERS AMONG 21 KILLED IN DELHI BLAZE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

A fire that ripped through an illegally expanded hotel in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar on Wednesday morning killed at least 21 people — including 11 foreign nationals — in one of the capital's deadliest blazes in recent years. It did not have a no-objection certificate from the fire department.

The Flourish Stay B&B in Hauz Rani had a licence for just six rooms but was running 25. Its windows were permanently sealed. It had a single entry-exit point with a sensor-operated main door. When fire broke out around 8.30 am, the five-floor narrow building turned into a furnace with a tiny exit. Visuals from the area — with narrow lanes, overhanging wires and cramped buildings haphazardly sharing space — showed high flames rising in the air and wires twisted in the heat hanging precariously. Horrified eyewitnesses watched people jump from upper floors and a woman clutching an infant leap onto mattresses spread below.

"As far as a fire NOC is concerned, we had not received any reference from either building authorities or licensing agency," Deputy Chief Fire Officer A K Malik said.

Most foreign victims were from Central Asian and African countries, staying nearby to care for relatives admitted to Max Hospital across the road. At least 58 people were rescued; several remain critical. The toll is likely to go up.

The blaze also killed eight members of a Gurugram family who had travelled to Delhi to visit an ailing relative. The victims, including a CA, his wife and two daughters, were staying on the first floor when the fire broke out.

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Rebels wrest Didi's Trinamool

SUBHENDU MAITI @ Kolkata

IN a massive shake-up that appeared to snatch the Trinamool Congress from its founder, Mamata Banerjee, the West Bengal Assembly Speaker on Wednesday recognised a 58-MLA rebel bloc as the "real Trinamool" and appointed expelled MLA **Ritabrata Banerjee** as Leader of the Opposition.

Speaker Rathindranath Bose accepted a letter signed by the rebel MLAs and formally recognised Banerjee, a first-timer from Uluberia Purba, as leader of the legislative party, and former minister Akhruzzaman as chief whip. The rebel camp also unveiled a new leadership structure for the legislature party. Veteran legislators Javed Ahmed Khan, Sandeepan Saha, Sabina Yasmin and Shiuli Saha would serve as deputy leaders. The assembly secretary symbolically handed over the keys to the LoP's chamber to Banerjee within hours. **P10**

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